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schemes, as will be seen in Fig. 266, where arabesques and interlacings are deftly interwoven with the letters.

If our capital characters cannot boast the graceful undulating forms of Arabic, nor yet the picturesqueness of Gothic letters, they have the merit of being easily read, and owing to the straightness and clearness of their lines, are very suitable for cutting hard stone, marble and even granite.

Inscriptions enter largely into Egyptian, Assyrian, Persian, Arabic, Greek, and Roman ornament in their buildings, pottery, sarcophagi, MSS., and textile fabrics. Indeed, it would be more correct to say that they have been adopted by all nations of the civilized world, nor is it necessary to travel beyond our own country to have the statement abundantly proved.

In conclusion we would remind the student that if he lays to heart, and inwardly digests, the vital principles advocated in this volume, success, real and lasting, will crown his honest endeavors.

## ON "ISLET IN THE CHESTNUT BLOOM."

BY CAROLINE A. MERIGHI.



HOUSE, too far away for its owners to care whether its decorations be imitated or not, offers itself to remembrance so temptingly that I will "e'en" tell of its beauties and wonders for the sake of such persons as may desire to follow a model so artistic and exceptional. Wealth is not wanting in our own country to create as fair a dwelling, and all save the house itself—an old one of which the gray tone is one of its many merits—can be repeated and offered to the appreciation of the friend, the criticism of the connoisseur.

On entering a door which divides the house in the middle, a hall is seen with panels in majolica set above its dark oak wainscoting and reaching to a ceiling but moderately high, this beautiful abode having as one of its advantages, a "cosiness" greatly due to the fact that it is but three stories high and contains no very lofty room or corridor.

Upon the panels referred to and in high-relief are represented the brilliantly plumaged birds of the surrounding country and its animals in wood and field. Each panel is divided from the succeeding one by a garland, also in majolica, showing the fruits and flowers of a favored clime. So true are the colors, so excellent the grouping, that the delighted gazer, little guessing the added beauties awaiting his admiration, is already tempted to give utterance to his enthusiasm, and well he may, for all about him appears to have life. Here a blue bird seems to fly to meet him, there a fawn pauses with lovely and affrighted eyes, and again, a squirrel, nut in paw, sits safely distant on the boughs above, while beneath him drops the acorn, chasing in its fall the glowing autumn leaf.

At the top of each panel branch out widely the huge aur-o-ch's horns and the broad antlers of the stag. Upon an immense sideboard at the left of the hall stand great flagons of glass made in Prague, on which is enamelled the entire process of beer-making and bottling, the workmen shown as busily engaged in transporting hop-vines, barrels and flasks, while in an opposite corner stands a Russian *samovar* with all its *appareil*, ready, summer and winter, to offer its warm and refreshing *chai* to the possibly thirsty visitor.

Arched above a door of exit and opposite to the door of entrance are great boughs of oak in majolica, marvellously imitated from nature, and having a glaze which conveys the idea of the moisture left by a shower. The door of entrance is similarly overarched with boughs of holly heavy with glittering hoar-frost and white with shining snow.

Above, the exquisitely painted ceiling represents with perfect truthfulness the nests of swallows as built in the eaves of old houses and across the entire stretch of this delicately tinted *plafond* these home-recalling birds fly in countless numbers and are so faithfully depicted that the illusion is complete, and looking up, the visitor involuntarily pauses to see some one of their number alight close beside him.

And now the fair hostess—in this "House of Dreams" both host and hostess are physically suited to their artistic surroundings—opens a door and the visitor enters upon—what shall I say?—enchantment? For here he is, as it were, "embowered in bliss." Above his head and completely covering a trellis-work of bamboo which runs along the walls and sustains them are passion flower vines so marvellously executed in metal with flowers of porcelain that no one has yet been able, until a close examination has been made, to discover that they are not very nature's own production. These arching vines meet upon the ceiling over head, and the rich purple, scarlet and blue clusters hang down temptingly, the blossoms mingling with the myriad tendrils as if instinct with life.

What adds to the naturalness of this most original decoration is the fact the vines appear to grow from what seem to be

beds of earth running in "garden boxes" along the sides of the walls. Forward of these are lounges of satin with soft cushions, set temptingly about a carpet imitating grass and moss. Small tables with vases of glowing flowers are repeated in long mirrors in which the reflection of the passion flower vines gives, although the room is not large, the effect of size and a prolonged reach of fantastic foliage.

On the opposite side of the hall and opening into the dining-room, which overlooks a lawn and a portion of the garden, is a second room, a reception-room. A small but surpassingly good piano—an "upright" stands out from the pale blue wall, its top entirely covered in all seasons with the most superb flowers. The ceiling represents the glow of morning as at sunrise, and the beauties of the dining room are visible from this room, owing to the fact that a *glace sans tain*, or mirror without a quicksilver back, fills in the entire intermediate space above a shelf, which, like the top of the piano, is always completely covered with natural flowers in jars of magnificent pottery, after Bernard Palissy and Léonard de Limoges. Over the *glace sans tain* a superb curtain of embroidered plush and satin can at any time be drawn to conceal the inner room, its always partly displayed folds serving as an additional decoration.

Let us now enter the dining-room, a very favorite resort of the *intimes* of this charming dwelling, both because of the breakfasts, dinners, lunches and suppers so dainty and delicious as to be quite indescribable except by a *gourmet* and—above all—because of the exceptional beauty of its decoration, fascinating alike to *cognoscenti* and unlettered men. Here is a wainscoting of dark oak upon one side with panels in wood work. A marvellous group of wild ducks, pheasants and woodcocks in natural colors and in high relief first greets the eye on the left of the door and beneath a disk of porcelain, four feet wide, upon which are painted field flowers, poppies, daisies and buttercups. Beneath this panel and a second having hares and wild rabbits as its subject stands a high sideboard upon which are pieces of the inimitable silverware of modern times by such wonder-workers as Duponchel and Rudolphi. An example of their work will I cite in a salver upheld by a circle of laughing nymphs chasing one another and bearing arched and vine laden boughs with which they endeavor to entrap and throw one another upon the ground. Many-colored flagons, chafing-dishes, glassware and old Saxe adorn the buffet. Along the wall stand straight backed chairs, while the table, capable of extension and contraction, is of oval form and of solid and floridly carved old mahogany. But it is the sight of the opposite wall of this exceptional dining-room that entrances the beholder, giving as it does a wonderful procession of bacchanalians after the most classic models and in life-size, and offering to the gazer's eye groups which it would take many pages to fitly describe in their living grace and vivid loveliness.

Passing up a staircase at the extreme end of the lower hall, the boudoir of the hostess is now displayed. The walls of this exquisite apartment are *capitonnées* or padded, like those of the boudoirs of Parisian *grandes dames*, and entirely in pale blue satin. Each wall has a painted panel in china of which the work is of miniature-like delicacy. Upon one is a group of sleeping maidens over whose heads hang branches laden with roses worthy of the Gulistan or "Rose-garden" of Persia. Upon another are saucy Cupids wrestling laughingly together. A third shows *Ino* holding a cluster of grapes above the mirthful lips of the "Infant Bacchus." A fourth displays a Spanish Gipsy girl dancing to the accompaniment of castinets. On the floor is spread a carpet imitating the skin of a leopard, which extends only far enough to meet a border painted upon the floor with thoroughly illusive effect and representing the growths of an Eastern jungle. Upon the mantel which reaches to the ceiling and consists of a succession of small shelves surrounding an oval mirror are *figurines* in various fine wares, ivory *chinoiseries* and groups of *terracotta* intermingled with Japanese vases in delicate blues and vivid yellows. Repeated in the mirror is a clock on a base of malachite and bearing a statuette of *Psyche*, after *Barbedienne*, on each side of which are silver cupids driving triumphantly tiny silver cars harnessed with butterflies of the same metal, their wings dazzling with many colored stones. The toilette-table standing between the windows, has an immense oval mirror surrounded by a wreath of convolvulus and its leaves in colored glass, perfectly imitating the natural vines and their varied blossoms. The ornaments of the table are all in "jewel-ware" which is to say that its cups and flasks are embossed on a smooth surface with glass in various tints surrounded by a rim like a jewel on a ring, this ornamentation running round the entire body of the flask or cup. Intermingled with these more modern ornaments are Venetian *tazze*, Florentine mosaics of old date and small figures in Parian marble, upholding tiny hand-mirrors, bracelets and finger rings. A curtain of pale blue plush with a wrought border of daisies is draped across the bath-room door, through which may be seen a deep bath-tub of metal set in rose-wood and walls lined with mirrors, the floor being laid with tiger skins.

An adjoining sleeping room is oddly furnished with ebony



## THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

only, its walls being hung with black satin relieved, however, with a copious "hand-applied" silver arabesque of exquisite effect. The lamp lighting this room represents the moon and hangs on the left side high up, while smaller lamps are in the shape of stars. Depending from the ceiling these fragile lamps gleam with the softest imaginable lustre.

Let us now pass up another flight of stairs and enter the reading-room which takes the half of the upper story, all the sleeping-rooms of the servants of this well-ordered household being in a separate building at the further end of the garden. The other half of the upper floor is given up to a billiard-room opening into a smoking-room. The walls of the reading-room are a poem in themselves. The dado represents a meadow in which grow poppies, daisies and cornflowers, myriad grasses and tall growing wheat. The space between the dado and frieze shows a blue sky over which float butterflies, dragon-flies and bees, while the frieze itself shows a flight of storks, pigeons and doves, the plumage of these birds seeming to stir with every changing light, so true is it to nature. In this out-of-door-like *interieur*, tables are set about bearing all that is best in literature past and present, and engravings, drawings and etchings in large portfolios of a form adapted to display them without inconvenience to the student. Easels upon which are choice paintings—among them a Cabanel representing a seraph—stand in two of the corners of the room. In a third corner stands a life-size figure in green bronze of a female Egyptian water-carrier and in the jar upon her shoulders is set a small jewelled time piece. In a fourth corner is a large metal figure of a seated Egyptian deity, the metal marvelously simulating stone, at the base of which figure stands an Oriental whose attire offers the richest colors, contrasting in an inimitably effective way with the dull color of the metal itself.

The smoking-room is wholly Oriental, having a divan which runs along the entire wall of this oval shaped apartment. Upon this divan are thrown countless cushions richly embroidered and scented with Arabian perfumes. Wrought bags containing the tobacco of every country wrapped in oil-silk to preserve its strength unimpaired, are hung upon the walls which are richly adorned with paintings representing the interiors of Turkish mansions in which the residents in gorgeous robes are smoking their nargules or chibonques, or East Indian groups watching the dancing of the nautch-girls, to which figures the rolling clouds of smoke ascending from the cigars, cigarettes or pipes of the host and his guests seem at times to give a life-like motion.

The billiard-room is quite simple in its furniture, having walls of cedar, a plain but substantially made table and no ornament save and excepting a copy in bronze of the "Discobolus" or Disk-thrower.

But the beauties of this blest abode are not all told if no mention be made of a fountain upon the lawn on the edge of which riot laughing marble cupids climbing into an immense vase, out of which rises the water, and tumbling back again, their chubby limbs recklessly displayed. This work is of extreme delicacy of treatment and of Italian origin. The garden itself shows every care and is noted for the large size of its pansies and the pure whiteness of its Easter-lilies. The lawn by which the house is approached is always perfectly kept and a few old trees add to the calm repose of a rippling brooklet which seems to have been placed there by nature just where it was needed to complete the picture. True, there is no lake here, but there are snowy swans who enjoy the waters below the fountain, and at times there are little cygnets to be seen near what would seem must needs be indeed an "Earthly Paradise."

### TERRA-COTTA.

FROM THE FRENCH OF JACQUEMART.

IN the grandeur of the expiring Roman Empire, when the people were wrapped in fine silk and purple, and when, to their sandals, they were covered with rich embroidery, pearls, and other precious stones, even when the vessels of gold, jasper, sardonyx, and onyx had superseded the earthen pottery for ornaments of the temples, and with the powerful, and there was symmetry in every line of the commonest form employed in architecture, when golden-grounded mosaics illumined the domes, and the rich columns were formed of many colored spirals, and when magnificent veils of the most costly silk were spread before the altar, the humble terra cotta introduced itself among all this splendor.

The bold cupolas, which the eye hesitates to measure under their dazzling images, which, if constructed of stone, would have sunk of their own weight; these cupolas owe their existence still, to excite our admiration, to the judicious employment of terra-cotta in hollow form. The ceramic art was drawn upon in a way not usually employed, and the ingenious masonry of these masterpieces of architecture was formed by kinds of truncated

bottles, strung one into the other, and disposed in parallel curves.

Other branches of pottery, excepting brickmaking, had so entirely disappeared as to leave us no mark of their having been employed at all; but in the expiring civilization of the period, a grand and noble part is bequeathed to terra-cotta to perform in the often exacting positions of architecture, and help perpetuate the achievements of man to the far-distant coming ages."

### SCAGLIOLA.



SCAGLIOLA decoration, although long practised in Italy, has had so far but a limited adoption in this country chiefly from want of knowledge as to its merits when well executed, and the few artists acquainted with the process of its application. Scagliola artistically treated consists of cement to which has been imparted variegated colorings that present semi-transparent lustrous hues, with exquisitely gradated tones, the surface showing a high degree of polish. It is particularly suited to the coating of pilasters, pillars and walls, being laid on brick or plaster, and admits of relief work fashioned whilst the cement is in a plastic state, though such work is seldom attempted. The semi-transparency of hues given to the surface of the cement may be best compared to Mexican onyx, the lustre and shading of which it may be made to resemble as well as variegated marble. The delicate fading away of borders of patches of color, and the nebulous appearance of lighter tints have some analogy to the effect of firing on metallic oxides of majolica ware. The cement may be either first rolled out on a shallow flat trough, being moistened with water, or first set in place. Whilst yet damp the colors are applied. Only earth colors are used, as the lime of which the cement is composed would destroy other pigments. These earth colors are mixed with water and applied with the brush in full, medium and light tones. The figures that are to show gradated tones are planted whilst the cement is in moister condition than for those patches which are to be more regularly defined. Thus at one time different portions of the surface are treated, so lessening the risk of smearing by dragging one color into another. The brush should be held in the hand straight from the surface and should be well charged as the cement will absorb considerable color. It is the finishing process which consists in applying heat with long handled flat irons similar to those used for encaustic painting that develops the colors, rendering them lustrous and appearing to shine up from semi-translucent depths besides imparting a high and pleasing polish to the surface. Keene's cement is to be exclusively used as it allows of twenty-four hours for coloring before permanently hardening, whilst other cement affords only about two hours of time. Should the coloring be done on sheets, these are attached to their intended place by a wash of fresh cement. Instead of vague patches of color with connecting forms of lighter hue the imitation of variegated marbles will prove often preferable particularly when some pronounced predominant color is required to suit the surroundings. It is to be remembered that there is rarely if ever a circle, a square or straight line in any marble; that in some descriptions the veins will trend in a common direction though taking different paths, and in others radiate over the ground. Gilded enrichments assort well with scagliola placed on other portions of connected surfaces, as on capitals of pillars and pilasters. Scagliola looks particularly well on pillars dividing rooms that open into each other; it is also extremely suitable for the walls of wide spaced halls and of stairways and landings, and for wall pilasters.

In a mine at Cornwall, in England, there has been discovered a lode of the rare and precious metal uranium, which has hitherto only been found in small pockets or patches and in two or three widely separated localities. So rare is it that a century ago its existence was unknown, and so valuable is it that the market price is about \$12,000 a ton. Two of the most important oxides of uranium are already used, the one in the production of costly black porcelain and the dark tints of majolica ware, the other in glass and porcelain manufacture, to produce beautiful golden and greenish colors, and, in conjunction with other minerals, opalescent hues. The chloride of uranium is also coming into use as a substitute for gold in photographic work. With platinum and copper the metal forms two fine alloys, each resembling gold and offers a substitute for gold in electro-plated ware.

A NEW substitute for glass in the form of varnished covered wire is being used where glass will not stand the vibrations or other conditions. The transparent wire-wove roofing, which is translucent, pliable as leather, and unbreakable, has for its basis a web of fine iron wire, with warp and weft threads about  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. apart. This netting is covered on both sides with a thick translucent varnish, containing a large percentage of linseed oil.